

# Violence-Related Injuries Treated in Emergency Rooms

*In August of 1997, the Bureau of Justice Statistics released a Bulletin entitled Violence-Related Injuries Treated in Hospital Emergency Departments, which presented findings from a study conducted using the Consumer Product Safety Commission's National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS) program of violence-related injuries treated in hospital emergency departments in 1994. These findings, as reported in the Bulletin, include the following:*

During 1994, U.S. hospital emergency departments (ED's) treated an estimated 1.4 million people for injuries from confirmed or suspected interpersonal violence. The study found that 94 percent of the persons treated for intentional or possibly intentional injuries sustained those injuries in an assault. About 31 percent of those injured during an assault -- or 29 percent of all of those injured -- indicated being injured during a fight. Two percent were injured during a completed or attempted robbery, and 5 percent were injured by an offender during a completed or attempted rape or sexual assault.

Three-fifths of all persons treated in ED's for injuries sustained in violence were male. Persons under age 25 comprised about half of those treated in ED's for violence-related injuries.

Blacks, who constitute about 13 percent of the population, represented 24 percent of those treated for violence-related injuries.

Patients treated as a result of confirmed (1.3 million) or suspected (82,000) violence represented a total of 1.5 percent of all visits to hospital ED's and 3.6 percent of the injury-related ED visits in 1994.

Of all persons treated for violence-related injuries: 7 percent had been injured by a

spouse or ex-spouse; 10 percent by a current or former boyfriend or girlfriend; 8 percent by a parent, child, sibling, or other relative; 23 percent by a friend or acquaintance; and 23 percent by strangers. In almost 30 percent of all cases in the study, the relationship of the person inflicting the injury to the patient was not recorded for the study.

A higher percentage of women than men were treated for injuries inflicted by an intimate partner -- a current or former spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend. Men were much more likely than women to be treated for injuries caused by acquaintances or strangers.

It is important to note that the estimated number of persons treated in ED's for injuries inflicted by intimate partners was 4 times higher than estimates from the National Crime Victimization Survey.

People injured in violence were treated for a variety of injuries: 34 percent for bruises or similar injuries; 31 percent for cuts, stab wounds, or internal injuries; 17 percent for fractures, sprains, dislocations, dental injuries, or other muscular/skeletal injuries; 5 percent for gunshot injuries; 5 percent for rapes/other sexual assaults; 4 percent for concussions or other head injuries; and 5 percent for other injuries.